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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

THE ORGANIZER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Vol. 4, No. 14

Agriculture Local 2, UFWA

September 1, 1939

PROMOTIONS OFFERED TO FOOD AND DRUG EMPLOYEES

Nine employees of the Food and Drug Administration will benefit from the application of a "Promotion-from-within" policy which has long been supported by the Union. These employees, who are in sub-professional classifications, are now earning from \$1020 to \$1620 a year. The new positions which they have been offered pay substantially higher salaries, five of them having been offered positions as inspectors, P-1 grade, paying \$2000 a year.

Last April the Union began to study the possibilities for promotions for Food and Drug employees when the new Food and Drug Act was to take effect. Conferences with Mr. Linton, business manager, and later with Mr. Campbell, chief of the Bureau failed to bring satisfactory assurance that the Department's promotion-from-within policy would be carried out in full.

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UNION BRINGS ACTION ON DELAYED RAISES

Special consideration will be given in this fiscal year to workers in the Department who are eligible for promotion within grade and have received no change in salary since January 1, 1934. This step was taken by the Department after completion of the survey on age of salaries made at the request of the Inter-Union Council.

This action should benefit hundreds of Federal employees performing satisfactory service year after year without seeing results in their pay envelope. While six years is too long a period for good workers to wait between salary increases, this is a real step toward the Union's goal of an annual salary increase for every worker who performs satisfactory service and whose salary is below the top for his grade.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, Sept. 11,

8 p m, 532 - 17 St. N. W.

THE ORGANIZER

Local 2 of the United Federal
Workers of America, CIO

President.....Simon Rottenberg
Vice-Pres.....Geniana Edwards
Editor.....Edmond Harris

THE UNION AND JOB SECURITY

No dismissal pay or unemployment compensation is provided by Government Departments for their employes. If at any time a Congressional cut in appropriations compels a section to discontinue its activities, employes face the possibility of being turned out of their jobs without any compensation to offset this sudden loss of income.

In these circumstances, however, Union membership does afford some protection. The recent case of one Union member, John Schricker, demonstrates this very well. Mr. Schricker, an employe of the Department for 17 years, was recently furloughed when the Washington staff of the Division of Soil Fertility Investigation was entirely eliminated in the last appropriation by Congress.

The Union's Adjustment Committee got right on the job for

Mr. Schricker. Possibilities of employment within the Department were explored by the committee and interviews were held with officials of the Bureau of Plant Industry and of Food and Drug Administration.

Mr. Schricker has now been offered and has accepted a position at the same salary and with opportunities for advancement equal to or better than he had in his previous position.

Increasing job security is another way in which UNION MEMBERSHIP PAYS.

PRESIDENT REASSURES FEDERAL WORKERS ON HATCH BILL

Fears that the Hatch bill might be distorted into a "gag act" are quieted by President Roosevelt's message to Congress. The bill reduces the unwholesome influence of partisan politics on the civil administration of the Federal Government, but does not deprive Federal employes of the rights of citizenship. Specifically, the President gave assurance that Federal workers are still free to join labor unions, either CIO or AFL, attend political meetings, make voluntary contributions for political purposes, or become members of Young Republican or Young Democrat clubs.

"GRAPES OF WRATH" - STORY OF MIGRATORY FARM WORKERS

There is no Fuehrer in California. Uniformed Stormtroopers do not march in squads throughout the countryside. Concentration camps as such do not exist. But in many important respects the "Okies" of John Steinbecks' "Grapes of Wrath" have much in common with the German people.

California land is mostly cultivated by farmers in frock coats. The huge ranches are owned chiefly by banks and large corporations. Cheap labor is their primary need.

The Joads and their neighbors, victims of the Great Drought, made their trek westward on the strength of the false but flowing picture portrayed by handbills. Steinbeck narrates graphically the conditions faced by the emigrants. Jobs were few and job-hunters numerous. The competition engendered drove wages below the subsistence level. A united front composed of the land owners, endeavored by force of arms and deprivation of civil rights to keep the "invaders" in subjection. Strikes were ruthlessly crushed and work camps guarded by rifles. The efforts of the Federal Government to alleviate the situation through the Farm Security Administration were bitterly fought.

GAUMNITZ OUTLINES CO-OP PRINCIPLES AT UNION MEETING

Dr. E. W. Gaumnitz, Director of the Division of Marketing and Marketing Agreements, was the featured speaker at an organization meeting of employes in the Division August 10. He drew on his experiences in the price-raising efforts of agricultural marketing cooperatives to outline the similar efforts to secure preferred position on the part of union organizations.

"Red" Dodd, organizer for the UFWA, stressed the democratic nature of organization of the employes in the Federal service in his explanation of the objectives and results of the United Federal Workers. Ed Harris, chairman of the meeting, closed the session with a statement of the program of the Marketing Division Committee which includes: 1 - negotiation of adjustments for employes, 2 - promotion of in-service training lectures, 3 - sponsorship of a program for raises and promotions.

Starved and beaten, outcast and hungry, the Joads and their companions slowly became united. It is this unity born of desperation which Steinbeck prophesies will someday triumph. For the "Okies" are many while the great land owners are few.

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The Union learned just a few weeks ago that more than half of the new positions had already been filled and not one of the present employes had been offered a position. At this point, the Union considered that the matter was serious enough to bring to the attention of Personnel Director Hendrickson.

The facts were placed before Mr. Hendrickson and an investigation requested. Several conferences were held on the matter and the outcome is considered highly satisfactory for the employes involved.

Editor's note: There has been a difference of opinion between Food and Drug officials and the Union on the meaning of the Department's promotion-from-within policy. The Union believes that, in filling vacancies, the qualifications of the employes WITHIN the Bureau should be considered and passed upon BEFORE OUTSIDE ELIGIBLES ARE CONSIDERED.

MEMBERSHIP BLANK

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to Simon Rottenberg, Room 0718
South Building.

AUGUST 14 MEETING WELCOMES
HOST OF NEW MEMBERS

After a very short business session, the August 14 meeting of Local 2 was turned over to Iz Salkind, master of ceremonies, who led a program of informal get together and welcome for new members and those union members of the Farm Security Administration who are now part of Local 2.

Some 75 members turned out and took part in the question period presided over by Professor Fizz, lent an appreciative ear to harmonica selections by Lona Goodwin, listened and joined in on songs of migratory laborers recorded and described by Margaret Valiant, and then stayed on for beer and pretzels and a bit of dancing. Miss Valiant's rich store of experience and materials gathered in the camps of the migratory agricultural workers of the Far West will be a part of the course on agricultural labor to be offered this fall by the United Federal Workers School under the sponsorship of Local 2.

All those present entered into the spirit of the affair and took advantage of the opportunity to get acquainted with each other. We wish that more members of the Local would come regularly to the bi-monthly meetings.